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THE HIGHER FUNCTION OF RACE

By JULIUS EVOLA (From *Revolt Against the Modern World*, pgs. 56-59)

Antagonism between peoples or a state of war between them is in itself not the cause of a civilization's collapse; on the contrary, the imminent sense of danger, just like victory, can consolidate, even in a material way, the network of a unitary structure and heat up a people's spirit through external manifestations, while peace and well-being may lead to a state of reduced tension that favors the action of the deeper causes of a possible disintegration.

The idea that is sometimes upheld against the insufficiency of these explanations is that of race. The unity and the purity of blood are believed by some to be the foundation of life and the strength of a civilization; therefore, the mixing and the ensuing "poisoning" of the blood are considered the initial cause of a civilization's decline. This too is an illusion, which among other things, lowers the notion of civilization to a naturalistic and biological plane, since this is the plane on which race is thought of in our day and age. Race, blood, hereditary purity of blood: these are merely "material" factors. A civilization in the true, traditional sense of the word arises only when a supernatural and nonhuman force of a higher order—a force that corresponds to the "pontifical" function, to the component of the rite, and to the principle of spirituality as the basis of a hierarchical differentiation of people—acts upon these factors. At the origin of every true civilization there lies a "divine" event (every great civilization has its own myth concerning divine founders): thus, no human or naturalistic factor can fully account for it. The adulteration and decline of civilizations is caused by an event of the same order, though it acts in the opposite, degenerative sense. When a race has lost contact with the only thing that has and can provide stability, namely, with the world of "Being"; and when in a race that which forms its most subtle yet most essential element has been lost, namely, the inner race and the race of the spirit—compared to which the race of the body and of the soul are only external manifestations and means of expression—then the collective organisms that a race has generated, no matter how great and powerful, are destined to descend into the world of contingency; they are at the mercy of what is irrational, becoming, and "historical," and of what is shaped "from below" and from the outside.

Blood and ethnic purity are factors that are valued in traditional civilizations too; their value, however, never justifies the employment, in the

case of human beings, of the same criteria employed to ascertain the presence of "pure blood" in a dog or in a horse—as is the case in some modern racist ideologies. The "blood" or "racial" factor plays a certain role not because it exists in the "psyche" (in the brain and in the opinions of an individual), but in the deepest forces of life that various traditions experience and act upon as typical formative energies. The blood registers the effects of this action, yet it provides through heredity a material that is preformed and refined so that through several generations, realizations similar to the original ones may be prepared and developed in a natural and spontaneous way. It is on this foundation—and on this foundation only—that, as we shall see, the traditional world often practiced the heredity of the castes and willed endogamous laws. If we refer, however, to the Indo-Aryan tradition in which the caste

system was the most rigorously applied, simply to be born in a caste, though necessary, was not considered enough; it was necessary for the quality virtually conferred upon a person at birth to be actualized by initiation. I have already mentioned that according to the Manudharmasastra unless a man undergoes initiation or "second birth," even though he may be an Aryan, he is not superior to a Sudra. I also related how three special differentiations of the divine fire animated the three hierarchically higher Persian *pishtra*, and that definite membership in one of them was sealed at the moment of initiation. Even in these instances we should not lose sight of two factors being present, and never mistake the formative element for the element that is formed, nor the conditioning for the conditioned factor. Both the higher castes and traditional aristocracies, as well as superior civilizations and races (those that enjoy the same status that the consecrated castes enjoy vis-a-vis the plebeian castes of the "children of the Earth") cannot be explained by blood, but through the blood, by something that goes beyond blood and that has a metabiological character.

When this "something" is truly powerful, or when it constitutes the deeper and most stable nucleus of a traditional civilization, then that civilization can preserve and reaffirm itself—even when ethnical mixtures and alterations occur (no matter how destructive they may be)—by reacting on the heterogeneous elements, and shaping them, by reducing them slowly but gradually to their own type, or by regenerating itself into a new, vibrant unity. In historical times there are a number of cases of this: China, Greece, Rome, Islam. Only when a civilization's generating root "from above" is no

longer alive and its "spiritual race" is worn out or broken does its decline set in, and this in tandem with its secularization and humanization.

When it comes to this point, the only forces that can be relied upon are those of the blood, which still carries atavistically within itself. Through race and instinct, the echo and the trace of the departed higher element that has been lost; it is only in this way that the "racist thesis in defense of the purity of blood can be validly upheld—if not to prevent, at least to delay the fatal outcome of the process of dissolution. It is impossible, however, to really prevent this outcome without an inner awakening.

Analogous observations can be made concerning the value and the power of traditional forms, principles, and laws. In a traditional social order there must be somebody in whom the principle upon which various institutions, legislations, and ethical and ritual regulations are based is truly active; this principle, though, must be an objective spiritual realization and not a simulacrum. In other words, what is required is an individual or an elite to assume the "pontifical" function of lords and mediators of power from above. Then even those who can only obey but who cannot adopt the law other than by complying with the external authority and tradition are able intuitively to know why they must obey; their obedience is not sterile because it allows them to participate effectively in the power and in the light. Just as when a magnetic current is present in a main circuit and induced currents are produced in other distinct circuits, provided they are syntonically arranged—likewise, some of the greatness, stability, and "fortune" that are found in the hierarchical apex pass invisibly into those who follow the mere form and the ritual with a pure heart. In that case, the tradition is firmly rooted, the social organism is unified and connected in all of its parts by an occult bond that is generally stronger than external contingencies.

When at the center, however, there is only a shallow function or when the titles of the representatives of the spiritual and regal authority are only nominal, then the pinnacle dissolves and the support crumbles. A highly significant legend in this regard is that of the people of Gog and Magog, who symbolize chaotic and demonic forces that are held back by traditional structures. According to this legend, these people attack when they realize that there is no longer anybody blowing the trumpets on that wall upon which an imperial type had previously arrested their siege, and that it was only the wind that produced the sounds they were hearing. Rites, institutions, laws, and customs may still continue to exist for a certain time; but with their

meaning lost and their "virtue" paralyzed they are nothing but empty shells. Once they are abandoned to themselves and have become secularized, they crumble like parched clay and become increasingly disfigured and altered, despite all attempts to retain from the outside, whether through violence or imposition, the lost inner unity. As long as a shadow of the action of the superior element remains, however, and an echo of it exists in the blood, the structure remains standing, the body still appears endowed with a soul, and the corpse—to use an image employed by de Gobineau—walks and is still capable of knocking down obstacles in its path. When the last residue of the force from above and of the race of the spirit is exhausted, in the new generations nothing else remains; there is no longer a riverbed to channel the current that is now dispersed in every direction. What emerges at this point is individualism, chaos, anarchy, a humanist hubris, and degeneration in every domain. The dam is broken. Although a semblance of ancient grandeur still remains, the smallest impact is enough to make an empire or state collapse and be replaced with a demonic inversion, namely, with the modern, omnipotent Leviathan, which is a mechanized and "totalitarian" collective system.

From prehistoric times to our own day and age this is what "evolution" has been all about. As we shall see, from the distant myth of divine regality through the descent from one caste to the next, mankind will reach the faceless forms of our contemporary civilization in which the tyranny of the pure demos and the world of the masses is increasingly and frightfully reawakening in the structures of mechanization.